

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 COME-00 PM-05 ACDA-12
CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-14 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08
NRC-07 SOE-02 DODE-00 DOE-11 SS-15 SP-02 /111 W
-----090612 302306Z /72

R 301750Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2595
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS LONDON 01625

USEEC
USOECN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. LL652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, UK, TECH
SUBJECT: BRITISH REACTOR CHOICE
REF: LONDON L383

1. WITH APPROVAL FOR THE ORDERING OF TWO ADVANCED GAS-COOLED REACTORS (AGR) NOW FINAL (REFTEL), LOCAL ATTENTION HAS FOCUSED ON THE EXTENT OF COMMITMENT TO A FUTURE PRESSURIZED WATER REACTOR (PWR) ORDER.

2. THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT APPEARS TO SAY A PWR CAN BE ORDERED, NOT BEFORE 1982, PROVIDED ALL NECESSARY SAFETY AND OTHER CLEARANCES ARE OBTAINED:

QUOTE. THE GOVERNMENT ALSO CONSIDER, HAVING REGARD TO THE IMPORTANCE OF NUCLEAR POWER AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIFFERENT SYSTEMS, THAT THE UK'S THERMAL REACTOR STRATEGY SHOULD NOT AT THIS STAGE BE DEPENDENT UPON AN EXCLUSIVE COMMITMENT TO ANY ONE REACTOR SYSTEM, AND THAT IN ADDITION TO THE AGR WE MUST DEVELOP THE
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OPTION OF ADOPTING THE PWR SYSTEM IN THE EARLY 1980S. THIS VIEW IS ALSO SUPPORTED BY THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY INDUSTRY.

THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY INDUSTRY HAVE INDICATED THAT, TO ESTABLISH THE PWR AS A VALID OPTION, THEY WISH TO DECLARE AN INTENTION THAT, PROVIDED DESIGN WORK IS SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED AND ALL NECESSARY GOVERNMENT AND

OTHER CONSENTS AND SAFETY CLEARANCES HAVE BEEN OBTAINED' THEY WILL ORDER A PWR STATION. THEY DO NOT CONSIDER THAT A START ON SITE COULD BE MADE BEFORE 1982. THIS INTENTION, WHICH DOES NOT CALL FOR AN IMMEDIATE ORDER OR A LETTER OF INTENT AT THE PRESENT TIME, IS ENDORSED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

ALL FUTURE ORDERS BEYOND THOSE WHICH I HAVE INDICATED TODAY WILL BE A MATTER FOR DECISION AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME. OUR AIM IS TO ESTABLISH A FLEXIBLE STRATEGY FOR THE UK NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAMME IN THE LIGHT OF DEVELOPING CIRCUMSTANCES. WE BELIEVE THAT THESE DECISIONS WILL DO SO. END QUOTE.

3. WHEN QUESTIONED IN PARLIAMENT WHETHER THE ENTIRE PWR-AGR DEBATE MUST BE REPEATED IN FOUR YEARS, ENERGY SECRETARY BENN MERELY REFERRED INQUIRIES TO THE ABOVE ANNOUNCEMENT, WHICH HE SAID HAD BEEN VERY CAREFULLY WORDED. IN A LATER PRESS CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, BENN SAID THE PWR WAS COVERED BY THE "FUTURE ORDERS" PART OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT. THUS, BENN HAS BOTH "ENDORSED THE INTENT" OF THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY INDUSTRY TO ORDER A PWR AND LEFT IT "AS A MATTER FOR DECISION AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME."

BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SALES, NUCLEAR REACTORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON01625
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780044-1144
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978018/aaaaagpd.tel
Line Count: 86
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fda4eae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LONDON 383
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3799594
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRITISH REACTOR CHOICE
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, UK
To: STATE USEEC MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fda4eae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014